**Georgia Law in the news**

**EPA emissions regulation to change**

In a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling, the EPA must consider regulating carbon dioxide and other gases found in automobile exhaust. Environmental law expert Peter A. Appel predicted in *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* that the EPA will defer the regulation until the next administration takes over in 2009. “In this political setting, here’s a great chance for [the] EPA to wring its hands and dither, and just wait until there’s a new administration.”

**Murder case to be tried on the scene**

The Brian Gene Nichols trial is scheduled to be tried in the same courthouse where he allegedly shot and killed a judge, a court reporter and a sheriff’s deputy, before killing a fourth – a customs agent – at another location. The case received national media coverage during the 26-hour manhunt for Nichols, and now legal experts claim a fair trial may not even be possible. Commenting on the case to *The New York Sun* and the *Los Angeles Times*, criminal procedure sage Ronald L. Carlson said, “This is not going to be one of those ‘What the heck, judge, everyone saw him do it’ cases.”

**More law firms expanding to Far East**

Troutman Sanders is the first Atlanta-based law firm to branch out into one of the world’s fastest-growing major economies. The firm recently opened an office in China’s capital of Shanghai to serve its multinational clients. C. Donald Johnson (J.D.’73), director of the Rusk Center and former ambassador, said to the *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, “(China’s) going to be the fastest-growing part of the world. To place yourself to take advantage of that is a great strategy.”

**Municipal bond tax case may see Supreme Court**

In February, the U.S. Supreme Court was poised to decide whether it would hear a Kentucky case that challenges states’ rights to exempt their own bonds from taxation if they tax the interest paid on other states’ bonds. Tax law authority Walter Hellerstein said there was a “high probability” that the case would be heard. “Ohio says ‘x,’ Kentucky says ‘y,’ and in our system only the Supreme Court can resolve this,” Hellerstein told a Reuters news agency reporter. The story ran in the *Los Angeles Times*, where Hellerstein stated, “The court may uphold so-called dual taxation . . . . States are allowed greater leeway to discriminate when they are acting as a market participant rather than a regulator.”

**Local murder trial expenses adding up**

While the murder trial of Brian Gene Nichols has already cost Georgia taxpayers more than $1.2 million, the final cost is expected to rise above $2 million. These mounting expenses had elicited taxpayer complaints when Prosecutorial Clinic Director and former District Attorney Alan A. Cook told *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, “The cost is shocking, particularly in a case where the question of factual guilt appears to be clear.” Cook went on to say, however, when the death penalty is sought, defense costs “justifiably ratchet up” because “the ultimate penalty is like no other.”

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**PIP partners with local service group to provide legal advice to artists**

This spring, Georgia Law’s Public Interest Practicum began collaborating with a local service group, Nuçi’s Space, to bring free legal information to the music and arts communities.

Working under legal supervision, law students are providing consultation and education to artists located in Athens-Clarke and Oconee counties who cannot afford an attorney.

Clients can get consultation, advice and referrals about legal questions including those involving housing, families, consumer debt, benefits and health care.

Inspired by Georgia Lawyers for the Arts, which provides advice and education to artists and art organizations throughout Georgia, this new service should complement those already available to artists and musicians.

**Red Clay Conference opens discussion on current environmental topics**

Land use, urban sprawl and water management were some of the headlining topics of the 19th Annual Red Clay Conference, titled “When Red Clay Meets Black Asphalt,” held earlier this spring.

This year’s keynote speaker was Robert J. Glennon, the Udall Professor of Law and Public Policy at the University of Arizona Rogers College of Law and author of the book *Water Follies: Groundwater Pumping and the Fate of America’s Fresh Waters*.

Glennon discussed major environmental problems, such as threats to our water supply caused by excessive groundwater pumping.

Conference panel topics included: sign ordinances, takings and inverse condemnation, new urbanism, Georgia’s state-wide water management plan and land use regarding coastal marshes and wetlands.

Attorneys, professors and experts in water use and land conservancy served as panelists.